Synopsis

PLIGHT OF WOMEN: A STUDY OF SELECT NOVELS OF INDIRA GOSWAMI

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INTRODUCTION:

Dr. Indira Goswami (1942-2011) mostly known by her pen name Mamoni Raisom Goswami born in an Assamese Orthodox Brahmin family to Umakanta Goswami and Ambika Devi, a family which is deeply associated with the Satra life of Eksarana Dharma. A well-known figure of Assamese literature is equally famous nationwide well, before she joined Delhi University in 1971 as a professor. After the unfortunate and untimely death of her husband, within less than two years of their marriage, changed the path of her life. She got many awards and recognition to her credit as Sahitya Academy in 1983, Gyanpith award in 2001 are the prominents. She was one of the few popular and influential figures of the North-East India who also tries to negotiate the peace process between the militant outfit ULFA and the Assam Government. Some of her remarkable works translated in English from her original Assamese version- include:

1. The Rusted Sword and two other novels (1980).
2. The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker (2004)
3. Pages Stained with blood (2001)
4. The Man from Chinnamasta (2005)
5. The Blue Naked God (2013)
6. The Shadows of Kamakhya (2001)
7. An Unfinished Autobiography (1990)

Research Problem :

Women are far away from the mainstream feminist ideology of the twenty first century and mostly suffer due to the male dominating patriarchal ideology. This research work will try to study on the multiple issues and problems faced by women, at various levels in the family or in the society like poverty, class and gender discrimination, sexual abuse, injustice, impact of custom tradition, social exclusion etc.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Several authors and critics have already completed the research work on the fictional world of Dr. Indira Goswami through different perspectives. The authors like Dr Shekhar Chakraborty, Archana Gupta, Dr M. N. Anjum, Abdul Barique represent widowhood, feminine sensibility and sexual desire through their research work. The scholars like Pubabi Goswami, Jintu Borah are also tried their hands discussing and analyzing the various issues on the novels of Dr. Indira Goswami. Scholars like Papori Das, Malabika Sarma also wrote some journal articles on the subject of New women germination and dystopian protagonist respectively. Some research works on the comparative study between Indira Goswami and Mahasweta Devi and between Indira Goswami and V. S. Naipaul have also been completed.

Aims and objectives of Research:

The main aim of the project is to focus on the flight or journey of the women at various levels- as unmarried women, married woman, widows etc. During the journey they have to face various issue and problems in their own household as well as in the society. So the main objectives of the study include:

1. To understand the plight of unmarried women, married women and widows in the selected novels of Indira Goswami.
2. To study the tradition, culture and nature of society (patriarchy) and existence and status of women
3. To understand the problems and issues faced by women- such as marital discord, discrimination, oppression and marginalization etc.
4. To analyze the women sufferings at various levels and their probable causes.
5. To examine the representation of women as reflected in the fictional world of Indira Goswami.
6. And the overall aim of the project is, to provide love, respect, freedom and equal status to all sections of women reforming the society.

Reseach Methodology:

The present study will apply basic methods of literary research such as close reading, explication, illustration and analysis. The Feminist Literary Theory will be used for content analysis of the novels of Indira Goswami. It will be divided into 5 chapters.

Hypothesis:

Indira Goswami's novels basically deal with the theme of oppression, suffering of women and other marginalized sections of society.

The present research work is taken three of her famous novels and would be based on assumptions:

i. The fictional world of Indira Goswami reflects the plight of women - married, unmarried and widows etc.
ii. Her novels unfold the inner world of women, such as emotion, aspiration, sexual desire class differences etc.
iii. Her women characters are victims of patriarchal nature of society.
iv. The women characters become a rebel in the wake of post colonial resurgence of democracy.

The Scope and Limitations of Research:

The broad area of the present study is Assamese Literature in English translation. The main focus of the proposed research work is limited to three selected novels, translated from the original Assamese publications of Indira Goswami. The three novels are- The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker, The Blue Naked God and The Man From Chinnamasta. The 8th edition of the MLA handbook will be used in the present work.

The Need and Significance of the Resesrch:

The novels of Indira Goswami are not mere stories but realistic pictures of life as she herself underwent with such kind of experiences as a woman and as a widow. The present study will help us to probe into feminine psychology of her protagonists. The study probe into woman's experience within the home and their struggle against the imposition of familial expectations. It will also explore female sexuality, middle class gentility and other evolving conflicts in modern India with an objective of reformation. It will also create reference material and provide for further research.

Tentative Chapterization:

The present research study will be around the following tentative chapter scheme.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter, introduction will deal with the basic introductory aspects like contribution of women writers in Assamese. It will also cover the biographical details of Indira Goswami. In addition, it covers contribution of Indira Goswami to the world of fiction and her location in the canon of Assamese Literature. It ends with review of research and recent development in Assamese literature.

Chapter II : Plight of women in 'The Moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker':

The second chapter tries to analyze the plights of women portrayed by the novelist. 'The moth Eaten Howdah of the Tusker' revolves around the lives of three Brahmin widows in the family of Satra culture. It boldly talks about the subjugation of widows. The plight of oppression on girls, women and widows in Hindu society in particular are the themes that ran through most of her novels, notably in 'The Moth Eaten Howdah of a Tusker', which is a modern Indian classic.

Chapter III: Plight of women in 'The man from Chinnamasta':

The third chapter will examine the plight of child widows and other social aspects of the lives of women depicted by Indira Goswami. Another significant depiction is that of an estranged wife of a college principal who was a foreigner and came to visit the Kamakhya temple in search of peace of mind.

Chapter IV: Plight of women in 'The Blue Naked God':

The fourth chapter traces basically the exploitation and destitute of widows in society. The Blue Naked God is one of the earliest works of Indian literature to highlight the pathetic journey of widows in Brindavan. The book was born out of Goswami's own early widowhood and a short experimental stay in a widows' home in the U.P. town. It explores misery and helplessness that the widows of Brindavan experienced in almost all aspects of life. They were of all ages bound together by the thread of common suffering and rejection by their loved ones. The novel was a path breaking work of fiction on the subject of Brindavan widows.

Chapter V : Conclusion

In the last chapter, we will conclude with the findings of the study. We will review the chapters we analyzed, in the previous chapters and try to from a cumulative idea out of it. It will enable us to conclude with the finding of the research project.

Research Scholar **Research Supervisor**

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